(c) Yes, Sir. The Wheel & Axle Unit of Durgapur Steel Plant was upgraded in Nov'93 at a cost of Rs. 143.66 crores under DSP modernisation project.

(d) There are two subsidiaries of SAIL viz. Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) and Maharashtra Elecktrosmelt Limited (MEL). Twin Hearth technology has been introduced in IISCO. At MEL, no technological upgradation has been made or is proposed at present.

Writing off SAIL Loan

4517. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have been actively considering to write off the loans given to SAIL from the Steel Development Fund ;

(b) if so, the total amount of loans Government propose to write off;

(c) the reasons as to why Government propose to write off such Loans to SAIL;

(d) whether Government have ascertained the causes of accumulation of loans with SAIL; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) and (b) Government has approved the waiver of loans along with interest thereon given to SAIL from Steel Development Fund, to a value of Rs. 5073 crore.

(c) The waiver of loans is part of the financial restructuring of SAIL with the objective of improving the financial health of the company and particularly to improve its ability to service debt and raise money for future projects.

(d) and (e) The accumulation of loans was mainly due to market borrowings which were used to fund modernisation of SAIL's steel plants at Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro. The total borrowings increased from Rs. 11,272 crores in 1993-94 to Rs. 20,851 crores in 1998-99.

Progress of Steel plant Project in Orissa

4518. SHRI ANANTA SETHI : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :